

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/824,621

Amendment in response to the Office Action mailed on December 22, 2006

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in reply to the Office Action mailed on December 22, 2006. Claims 1-8, 10 and 32-40 are pending in the patent application. Claims 1, 32 and 37 have been amended. A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is submitted with this response. No new matter has been added by this response.

Claims 1-8, 10, and 32-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,641,483 to Luciano et al. ("*Luciano*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,774,058 to Henry et al. ("*Henry*"). Applicants disagree with and traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Amended claim 1 is directed to an apparatus that remotely, selectively controls access to a plurality of physical areas of a plurality of gaming machines. The apparatus includes a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms that are each respectively associated with one of the plurality of physical areas of each of the gaming machines, where each lock mechanism is physically movable between unlocked and locked conditions with respect to its associated area. The apparatus also includes control circuitry independent of the plurality of gaming machines. The control circuitry includes a processor operating under control of a stored program and coupled to each of the lock mechanisms via a communications link for controlling operation thereof. A data storage and retrieval system is adapted to communicate with the processor and includes a storage medium for storing data including personnel identification data and access authorization data indicative of the gaming machines and the physical areas, if any, of each of the plurality of gaming machines for which a person seeking access to the gaming machines is authorized. In other words, the access authorization data indicates

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the particular gaming machines that a person is authorized to access. The access authorization data also indicates the specific physical areas of the particular gaming machines to which a person has authorization to access. Support for this subject matter is found in the first paragraph of page 7 of the application.

Amended claim 1 further includes a data input device connected to at least one of the plurality of gaming machines and coupled to the processor, where the data input device enables a person to input at least personnel identification data that identifies the person. The apparatus also includes a processor that compares the personnel identification data inputted by the person with the personnel identification data stored by the storage media that authorizes access by certain, identified personnel to certain designated gaming machines of the plurality of gaming machines and to a plurality, but not all, of the physical areas of the designated gaming machines. The processor causes the lock mechanisms of the plurality of physical areas to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those plurality of physical areas of the designated gaming machines when the personnel identification data inputted by the person matches any of the personnel identification data stored by the storage medium.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that *Luciano* teaches all of the elements of amended claim 1, except for "the details of the operation of electronic locks." (see the Office Action, page 2). The Examiner therefore relies on *Henry* to remedy the deficiencies of *Luciano*.

Neither *Luciano* nor *Henry* disclose or suggest access authorization data that indicates the particular gaming machines to which a person has authorization to access and that also indicates the physical areas, if any, of each of those particular gaming machines to which the person is authorized to access. In other words, neither *Luciano*

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nor *Henry* disclose or suggest providing authorization for a person to access particular gaming machines and certain of the physical areas of those authorized gaming machines.

In contrast, *Luciano* is directed to a lockable security cabinet for casino game controllers where the cabinet includes multiple key locking doors. Access to the doors is reserved for authorized persons having the proper key for each particular area. In an embodiment, *Luciano* discloses that electronic locks having a code can be used in place of the rotary key locks. *Luciano* does not disclose or suggest storing authorization data which authorizes a person to access certain gaming machines of a plurality of gaming machines and a plurality of the physical areas of the authorized gaming machines.

Furthermore, *Henry* is directed to a remote access system which remotely accesses one or more electronic locks from a locally placed computer. Specifically, *Henry* states that "electronic lock 12 is configured with a key pad 22 which allows the user to input data into lock 12," to "activate and deactivate the internal locking mechanisms as well as the external ones of a safe 10." (Col. 4, lines 26-66). *Henry*, however, only discloses authorizing access to a single electronic lock of one or more devices. (Col. 2, lines 52-55). *Henry* does not disclose or suggest a plurality of gaming machines each having a plurality of access areas where a person enters or inputs their personal identification data to obtain authorization to access certain of the gaming machines and certain of the physical areas of those gaming machines. At best, *Henry* discloses remotely locking and unlocking a single lock at different locations.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that "clearly a system that may be used on a single system may be used on a plurality of systems." (See the Office Action, p. 3). Applicants disagree.

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First, *Luciano* does not disclose or suggest opening locks associated with a plurality of gaming machines. Second, *Henry*, at best, discloses locking and unlocking a single lock at a plurality of locations but does not disclose or suggest opening a plurality of locks at a plurality of locations. Furthermore, neither *Luciano* nor *Henry* disclose or suggest a data storage and retrieval system that includes personal identification data and access authorization data where the access authorization data indicates the particular gaming machines and the physical areas of each of the particular gaming machines to which a person seeking access to the gaming machines is authorized. In other words, the claimed invention stores authorization data which authorizes a person to access certain gaming machines and also access certain of the physical areas of those authorized gaming machines. Neither *Luciano* nor *Henry* disclose or suggest storing authorization data which grants access to certain gaming machines of a plurality of gaming machines.

Accordingly, neither *Luciano* nor *Henry* nor the combination of *Luciano* and *Henry*, disclose or suggest the subject matter of the claimed invention. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 1-8, 10 and 32-40 are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Henry* and in condition for allowance.

Amended claim 32 includes similar subject matter to amended claim 1 and specifically states that the method includes "inputting at least personal identification information into a data input device connected to at least one of the gaming machines that identifies a person seeking access to a plurality of said physical areas of the plurality of gaming machines" and "remotely, electrically unlocking a plurality of lock mechanisms of only those plurality of physical areas, less than all of the physical areas, of the particular gaming machines, for which the person seeking access is

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authorized...." Thus, amended claim 32 includes access authorization data that authorizes a person to access certain gaming machines of a plurality of gaming machines and certain physical areas of the authorized gaming machines. As stated above, the combination of *Luciano* and *Henry* does not disclose or suggest such subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants submit that amended claim 32, and the claims that depend therefrom, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Henry* and in condition for allowance.

Amended claim 37 is similar to amended claims 1 and 32. Specifically, amended claim 37 includes, among other things, access authorization data that indicates which of the designated gaming machines and physical areas of the designated gaming machines for which a person is authorized to access. As stated above, neither *Luciano* nor *Henry* disclose or suggest authorization data that authorizes a person to access certain of the gaming machines and then certain of the physical areas of those authorized gaming machines. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that amended claim 37, and the claims that depend therefrom, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Henry* and in condition for allowance.

In light of the above, Applicants submit that claims 1-8, 10, 32-40, are each patentable over the art of record because the cited art does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of these claims. Accordingly, Applicants request that claims 1-8, 10, and 32-40 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

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A fee of \$790.00 is required for the RCE. The Examiner is authorized to deduct the RCE fee and any other fees from Deposit Account No. 19-1351. If such withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (25814-403120) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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